

TRYON   
RESORT

Official Guide to

AMERICAN  
HOBBY HORSE™







## ABOUT

The American Hobby Horse™ series was first launched at Tryon International Equestrian Center in 2017, the first known hobby horse competition in the United States, and quickly became one of the most popular events offered on Saturday afternoons in July and October. Hobby Horsing is the “safe, fun and affordable way to ride horses,” and we want you to learn more about this exciting sport!

Whether you’re hoping to come compete in our next competition or are looking to start your own practice squad, you can learn more about this horseless horse show below.

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## FAQ

### What is Hobby Horse?

Competitive hobby horsing originated in Finland and has more than 10,000 active participants. Competitions have been seen repeatedly on mainstream media outlets and social media platforms, even earning coverage from networks and programs on ESPN and ABC, and in publications like The Wall Street Journal.

Riders participating in competitive hobby horsing – a toy consisting of a stick with a model horse head – perform and mimic the movements and technicality of horseback riding in the disciplines of show jumping and dressage, then translate that to their stick horse, where judges mark and score their rounds. For participants competing in show jumping, courses are set with tricky combinations and patterns, similar to the show jumping competitions seen at TIEC throughout the year.



### When are Hobby Horse competitions happening at TIEC?

TIEC typically hosts Hobby Horse competitions every Saturday during our Summer Series in July and during our Fall Series in October! Depending on weather or other external circumstances, sometimes the timing of hobby horse competition offerings changes. Always check [www.Tryon.com/hobbyhorse](http://www.Tryon.com/hobbyhorse) for the latest schedules and updates.

### Where are Hobby Horse competitions happening?

Regular hobby horse competitions are typically held in the front green space next to the General Store, in Legends Plaza. Our Hobby Horse Final is held in the Tryon Stadium itself before Saturday Night Lights competition!

### What disciplines or sports does TIEC offer?

Because we want hobby horse competition to be easily accessible to the many non-equestrian guests we welcome to Saturday Night Lights, and in line with our goal to spread the magic of horses from carousel to competition, we choose to offer jumping only at this time. The objective nature of the sport means that it's easy to understand without instruction or practice time. In the future, though, there's no telling what we'll add to the roster! Barrel racing? Dressage? Stay tuned!





### **What fence heights or divisions are offered at TIEC?**

Courses for each age group will be posted at the check-in table on the day of competition. Divisions are designated by age with classes at various jump heights offered:

- Ages 6 & under: Cross-rails, 18in.
- Ages 7-8: Cross-rails, 18in.
- Ages 9-11: 18in., 2ft.
- Ages 12-14: 2ft., 2ft. 6in.

Children may compete in all of the height levels within their age division. If there are more than 12 entries in a class, we will split into 2 classes.

### **Are there any specific rules or regulations for participants?**

Riders must complete the entire course with their hobby horse and will incur one fault for every rail knocked down during their time on course. Results will be based on the time in which the rider completes the course, with the fastest rider taking first place. The top eight places will be awarded ribbons for each division at the conclusion of each class. Participants should wear comfortable, athletic attire and running shoes or tennis shoes, and must “ride” the hobby horse while on course. Carrying your horse to the side does not count!



### **Are there special awards or prizes?**

Throughout each four-week series, special awards are given each week to the Best Hobby Horse and the Best Turned Out Rider. These awards are based upon the unique style of the horse and the rider’s outfits and chosen by the announcer. We also present a Sportsmanship award to the most sportsmanlike hobby horse participant!



## DIY Hobby Horsing

In the following section, we'll walk you through everything needed to create your own hobby horse competition for the sport of show jumping, whether you're practicing with barn friends, competing against your siblings in the backyard, or want to start a league of your own!

**Kids:** remember to always ask for your parent or guardian's permission first!



### Materials Needed:

- **Hobby Horse:** Whether ordered online or handmade, anything from a pool noodle to a broomstick can serve as your trusty steed. There are many online tutorials and DIY stick horses for inspiration!
- **Obstacles:** Tryon Resort Hobby Horse competitions typically include 4-7 jumps per course, depending on the age group of the division. While our jumps are miniature versions of the real thing you'll see in competition in Tryon Stadium, almost anything on hand can be repurposed for jump rails, and placed on anything from buckets to chairs (just make sure they can fall if knocked, and so they don't trip you up!). Some suggested household or barn items include:
  - Brooms/mops
  - Pool noodles
  - PVC pipe
  - Tree/bush branches (gathered with permission!)
- **Courses:** We've included some sample courses in this guide. If you've got all day or have competitors who need a challenge, make the courses as elaborate as you want! If you've got a limited time frame or many entries, we recommend utilizing simple courses that start and end near your "in-gate" to reduce the time each rider spends on course. Feel free to use your imagination here!
- **Where to set up your course:** We find that a grass or all-weather surface (like our arena footing) is safest for competitors who are racing around a course. Be careful during or following wet conditions!
- **Timer/Scorekeeper:** Use a stopwatch to keep track of each competitor's time on course! At Tryon Resort, we start and stop timers when riders pass over the first and last obstacle. You can set up start and finish "lines" if you'd like!



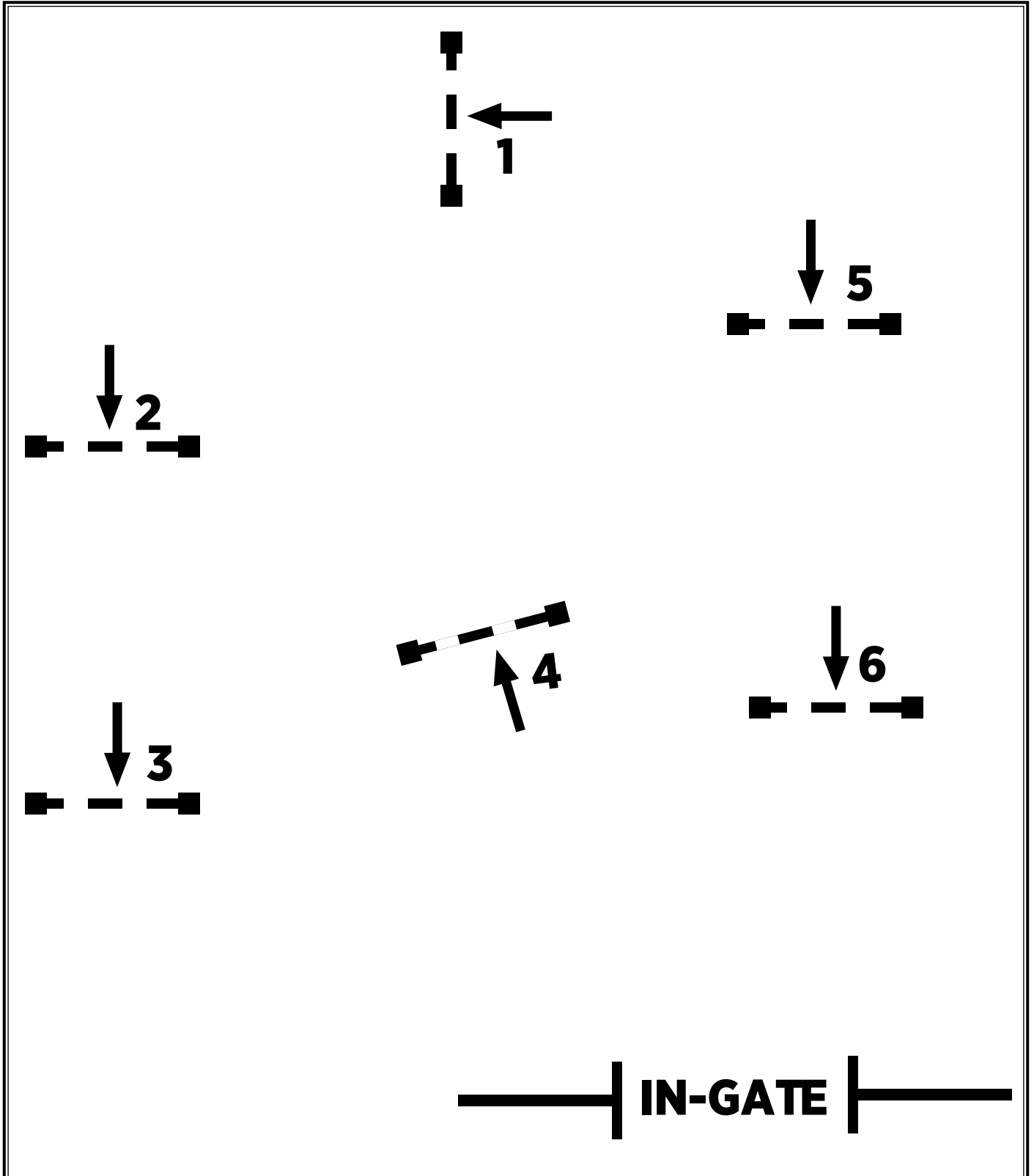
### Some Optional Materials Helpful to Organized Events:

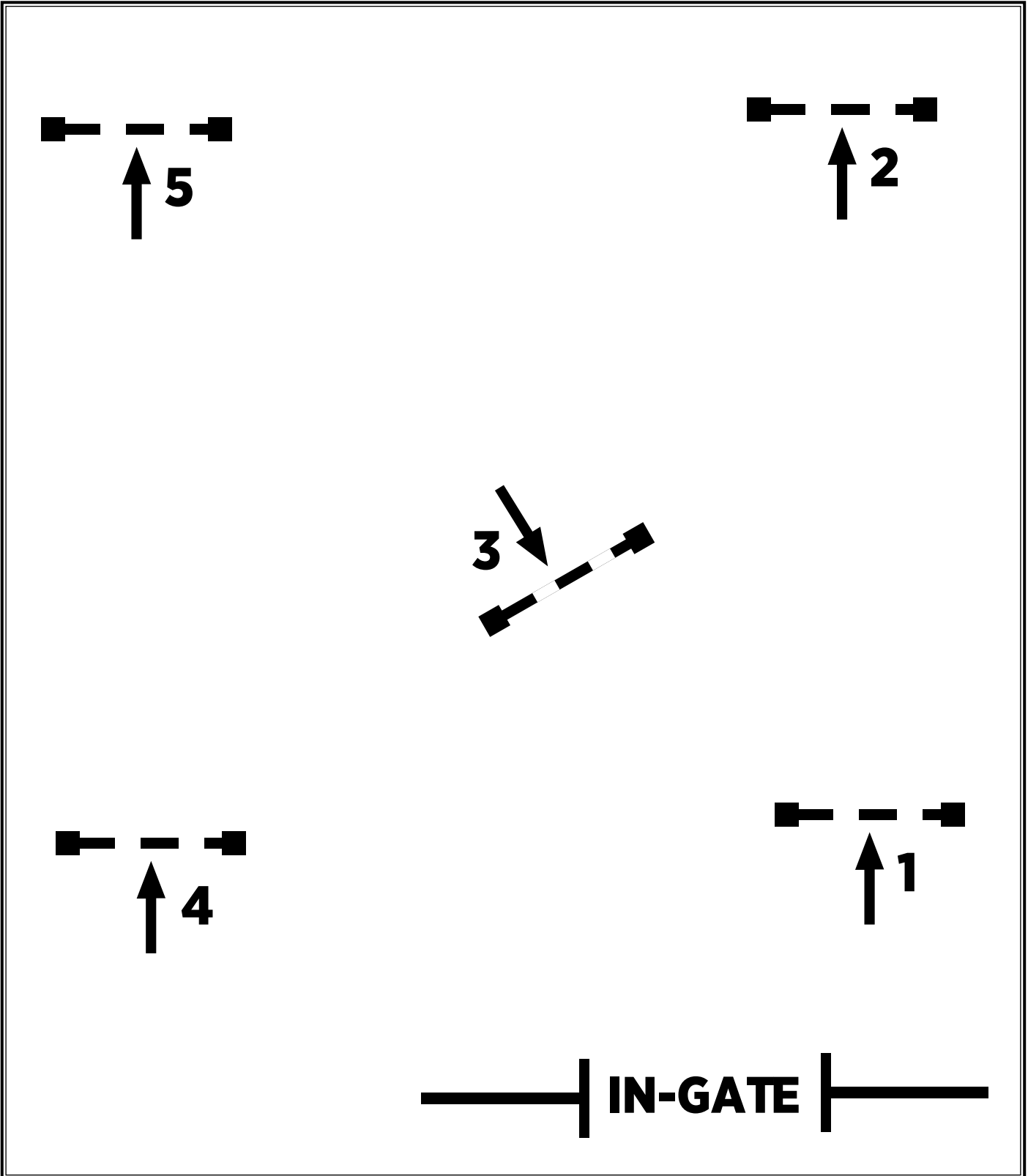
- **Sign-up or check-in sheet by class:** at Tryon Resort, competitors are required to sign up the day prior to competition in order for their rides to count for prizes. This way, we have an accurate count of competitors and can have enough prizes on hand! If you're putting on an organized event, have competitors sign up via form or email so your classes can fill just like at a regular horse show. Formal order-of-go not required - we usually take volunteers for who wants to go first!
- **Announcer:** Not required, but fun! Announcers can also help wrangle the next class from the spectator area.
- **Ribbons or other prizes:** American Hobby Horse at Tryon Resort is free for all participants, but thanks to our sponsors, we're able to give away fun prizes like real horse show ribbons, gift cards or free treats like ice cream, toys and more.
- **Judge:** some disciplines or competitions may require a judge. The choices for your judge are endless, from respected equestrian professional to a local celebrity!
- **Back numbers:** though we found them expensive to print weekly and unused by some participants, using back numbers can make it feel more like a "real" horse show.



### Suggestions for alternate competitions:

- Steeplechase race
- Dressage (requires subjective judging)
- Hunters (requires subjective judging)
- Flat classes - walk trot and canter as a group! (requires subjective judging)
- Barrel racing
- "Model class" - best homemade hobby horses (requires subjective judging)
- Relay races or pairs competition
- Eventing - Dressage, Cross-Country, and Jumping "triathlon" (requires subjective judging)
- Costume contest - themed or un-themed







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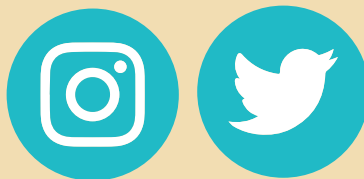
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We love seeing Hobby Horse grow! Please tag us on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook:



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